
TRINITY COLLEGE
LIBRARY
MOORE
COLLECTION
RELATING
TO THE
FAR EAST
CLASS NO.
BOOK NO.
VOLUME
ACCESSION NO.

The Word for God in Chinese

Stanley



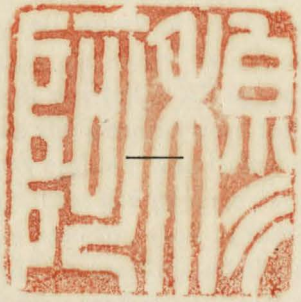
THE WORD FOR GOD IN CHINESE

BY THE REV. C. A. STANLEY, D.D.,

of the American Board Mission, Tientsin, China

SECOND EDITION

REVISED



FOR SALE BY THE
METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, SHANGHAI & FOOCHOW,
KELLY & WALSH, BREWER & CO., MISSION PRESS
AND EDWARD EVANS BOOK ROOM, SHANGHAI

1909

Preface to the Second Edition.

In issuing a second edition of this little book, I am influenced by the same desire of inciting to inquiry after truth and facts as at the first; by a conviction from over forty years' observation that very few of the missionaries have studied and carefully considered the subject and by the fact that over two-thirds of the first edition mysteriously disappeared before delivery; and by the following letter from a friend deeply interested in the subject. For the sake of a pure gospel, I beg the missionaries to read carefully, consider prayerfully, use the same common sense they would in translating any other word and I am sure, God will give guidance.

My Dear Dr. Stanley :—

"I congratulate you most heartily on having put the gist of "The best word for God" in "a nut shell." Your style is plain, simple and interesting. I have not heard a single adverse criticism; all speak of the book most favorably. I have read it through carefully twice, and heartily approve all you have so well written. All agree that your argument in favor of *Shen* as the generic word for god in the Chinese language is unanswerable; and that you have shown, page 5th and following that the generic word for god in every language is always used for God in that language: and that it is quite *impossible* to use for God the name of any heathen god. I think all who read it will feel sure you have found the only true solution of "the problem." I have been glad to put it into the hands of missionaries passing through here, and they have written thanking me, and asking for copies to give to other members of their mission. I believe it has been greatly blessed.

It is out of stock at the Methodist Publishing House and the Presbyterian Mission Press, and I hope you will publish another edition. It may be that God will glorify His Great and Holy Name by using it to lay a sure and solid foundation for the church and faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in China, and for its Christian literature.

The Pei Tai Hö conference, whose members are the founders of the "Federation," unanimously agreed that *Shen* is the generic word in Chinese for God. That should have been the end of it, for in all languages, the generic word or term is used for God, and indeed *must be;* it is quite *impossible* to use any other, especially the name of a heathen deity. It must strike every one that Jupiter and Shangti occupy relatively much the same position. The word Jupiter is said to be derived from Diovis-Pater or Dies-piter, the Father of Heaven, or Heavenly Father. But there is no evidence that the Apostles ever used the word Jupiter to convey the idea of "Heavenly Father" or any other Christian sentiment. We can not believe that the word *could* be used either then or now in any such sense. Shangti literally means *shang* above, and *Ti* Emperor. I do not find in the ancient writings of the Chinese that *Ti* ever means ruler or anything else but emperor, till the time ancestral worship was introduced, and then it was applied to the deified Emperors who were styled "the *Shangti.*"—the Emperors above. From being Emperor on earth and "reigning over all the earth," he was deified and went to reign on high over all the universe. But granting that like Jupiter, it had a good meaning, as "Ruler on High," "Supreme Ruler," or "Heavenly Ruler" still it is the name of a false god, who has no real existence—a myth—a mere imaginary being that must be proscribed. "Make no mention of the name," "let it not be heard out of thy mouth". Ex. 23: 13. In God's most Holy Word He says, "the things the Gentiles sacrifice

they sacrifice to devils" 1 Cor. 10 : 20. *Shangti* is sacrificed to by the heathen Emperors of China. How can we avoid the conclusion this passage of Scriptures forces upon us? How can we avoid the conclusion that it is wicked and blasphemous to put the name of such a being into our Bibles where the word God ought to stand? How dare we put His name in our hymns and stand up and sing his praise? How can we fall down on our knees and worship a false god? Judge you how wrong it is to tell the heathen or those recently from heathenism, that this, the chief of their false gods, is the true God, or the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Many, and perhaps most, seem to make the mistake of thinking we are seeking a *Name* for God. Jehovah is His self-chosen name, and no one has a right to give Him another. Though there are many terms we may apply to Him; as, "Heavenly Father" etc., yet those are not now our quest. As you have so ably pointed out we simply want to know what is the word for deity or god in the Chinese language. We say in English, "there is only one God:" we may as safely tell the Chinese there is only one *Shen*, and that all the others are false *shen* and must not be worshipped or thought of. That they must be done away with and forgotten amongst all the other evil works of Satan.

How sad to see so much apathy and indifference in a matter of so great importance as whether we worship the true God or a false one. "These terms (for God and Spirit) lie at the very root of our religion. Without a good and true terminology here we can not teach Christianity aright." *Burdon.* One man, twenty-two years a missionary in China, standing high in his church, a Doctor of Divinity, said he did not know enough of the language to tell what word to use for God. Another said he used all the "terms"; that is, he

mixes the true and the false and teaches others to do so. Another said he did not know much about the "Term question" but he did know the importance of "Union." Did he know the importance of speaking the truth? Another said he was calling God by the name of *Shangti;* that it is a good name, and he had a right to apply it to God. Others say they worship the *true* Shangti; but the true Shangti is a false god. Others claim that when they use the word *Shangti* they *mean* God. Why then do they not say God!! I suppose that every one will agree that *Shangti* does not mean God or even god; what elohim and theos mean.

There can be no doubt as to the final result. No matter how many "Federations" or how strong they are, no matter how many Bibles are defiled with the name of a false god: no matter how long, or how much, people falsely teach that *Shangti* is the father of our Savior, no true Christian will worship a false god or call Jehovah by the name of a false god.

On learning that I did not worship Shangti, one missionary said to me, "Then you are not with the majority." "No" I said, "if I wanted to be with the majority I should have to join the Buddhists." Majorities do not count in moral questions; as Davy Crocket said, "Be sure you're right, then go ahead." I believe there are as many in China, who since their conversion, have not bowed the knee to *Shangti* as there were in Israel, in the time of Elijah, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. We can afford to wait. "A thousand years is with the Lord as one day." He is able to defend His own "glory," and will.

Yours Sincerely"

The Word for God in Chinese.

I reached Shanghai in the winter of 1862. The first idol I saw in China was an image of *Shangti* about 15 feet high. Although I lived in the family of a missionary for two months who used *Shen* for God, he said not one word to influence me. But I had barely reached Tientsin when I received a letter from a Shangti man urging me to use that term. These incidents determined me to make a careful study of the subject. I have a number of brochures on both sides; I have read the articles in the Chinese Repository; I have had extensive examination made of Chinese literature and usage; I have conversed with and questioned many Chinese teachers and literati; and I have not found *one*, unless he was under foreign tutelage, who did not say, "Shangti is T'ien," or "Shangti is an idol;" or *one* who acknowledged there was the shadow of an intimation in Chinese literature that Shangti was self-existent, the "I am," or the Creator (Isai.42), or GOD in any sense. But I have found those who, from their church connection were compelled to use Shangti, yet strongly protested against the use of such a name for the "Living and true God." As T'ien, one Shangti is chief among many Shangti, (just as the Emperor is Hwangti over every other Hwangti), and over an innumerable host of other shen, including deified Emperors; but to the common people, he is simply an idol having his temples and mud images scattered over China.

A writer in the Chinese Repository, vol. xv, p.589 fol., writes; "The ancient Chinese, while worshipping many gods, did yet acknowledge one Supreme Lord. While worshipping a host of idols 'under every green tree and on every high hill' they had yet sufficient of the light of nature, or the glimerings of revelation and tradition, to teach them

that there must be one being above all others. The Greeks had their Zeus, the Romans their Jupiter, the Phenicians their Baal, the Britons their Woden, and the Chinese their Shangti or T'ien.... All scriptural authority, all apostolic example, and all Christian custom, is in favor of using the *generic* term for *divinity* in each nation as the designation of the true God. In Greek, although there was the term Zeus appropriated to their Supreme God, of whom glorious things were spoken, yet the overwhelming authority of Christ and the Apostles, to say nothing of all the Greek fathers, decided that the word *Theos* and *Kurios* shall be used, and this, well knowing that the pagan Greeks worshipped 'Gods many and Lords many.' In Latin, although there was a Jupiter equally supreme among the gods, yet uniform custom, sanctioned doubtless by the Apostle Paul, who dwelt so long at Rome, has been to use *Deus* and Dominus, though the *Dii* and Domini of Rome were as numerous and false as the *Kwei-shen* of China. In the nations of northern Europe, though there was the powerful Woden and Thor, yet the generic and simple terms *God* and Lord have been the chosen terms in which British and American Christians worship their Creator. And in Germany *Gott* and Herr have received only an additional sanction in the venerable version of Luther. Why, then, should the descendants of those who reject the terms Woden and Thor and Jupiter, etc., adopt the name of the national god of China to designate Jehovah? Shangti admits a multitude of inferior gods without jealousy, but Jehovah says, 'I am God and there is none else' for divinity is centered in Himself alone."—The terms for God and Holy Spirit are of the greatest importance in any language. "These terms lie at the very root of our religion. Without a good and true terminology here, we can not teach Christianity aright." (Bp. Burdon). The writer above quoted, referring to Christ's appeal to the 82d Psalm,

"I said ye are gods" (Elohim), in John 10:34-6, "If he called them gods (Theos) to whom the word of God (Theos) came, say ye 'Thou blasphemest' because I said, I am the Son of God?" (Theos) The whole force of the argument depends on the use of the same word "god" in each case. Look how it is weakened, or rather the meaning totally lost by using Shangti in any *one* of these places where *theos* is used in *every* case. We do not see any reason why the inspired example of using only one word in all these cases should not be followed by us. If Shangti be the proper *generic* term for god, use it altogether; but do not arbitrarily interpret and confound by different terms, what the Holy Spirit has expressed by "one." This applies to many places in the Bible; *e.g.* "Beside me there is no *Shen*" in some places, in others "no *Shangti*," which is a false statement.

It is worthy of consideration that the Japanese and Koreans reject Shangti as a term not applicable to God. They long ago adopted the classical literature of China and are presumably quite as able to interpret it as our "learned" sinalogues. All would admit this on any other question. It is a fact also that the Nestorians, Mohammedans, and the Roman and Greek churches reject this term. Dr. Eitel says, "The learned Jesuits defended the classical term Shangti for God as being a relic of monotheism which obtained before Confucianism, Buddhism or Taoism misused that term, giving it a pantheistic or polytheistic sense." The Jesuits thought it would "appeal to, and win the literati to the church," and Dr. Legge agreed with these two ideas. But the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the "Society of Foreign Missions" rejected the term. The learned Jesuit Visdelou, who rejected the term, wrote; "Let it not be imagined that the present religion of the Chinese is different from the ancient; for though there have been innovations from time to time, in respect to place, time, and

form, yet the principal things are practiced according to the ancient rites. Now-a-days, as at other times, they sacrifice to heaven, to the earth, to rivers, to ancestors, etc. Now-a-days the ancient ceremonies are still in use, excepting a small number which have been changed from no other motive, but that they have been deemed not agreeable to antiquity."

I present these few facts for the willing, careful, prayerful consideration of the missionary body in China; hoping for the application of common sense in their use—and to incite to further investigation, if these incontrovertible facts are thought insufficient by any one. God forbids calling Him by the name of an idol or false god (Hos. 2.16); He will not give His "glory" to another (Isai.42): yet this is just what is being done continually. It must not be overlooked that there is just as much reason for saying "In the beginning," Siva, Buddha, Krishna, Kwanyin, Zeus, Woden or Thor, "created the heavens" etc., as to say Shangti did.

Importance in Translating.

In translating the Holy Scriptures into any language, the rending of the words God and Spirit is of the greatest importance: for a correct understanding of these words bears a very close relation to a sound theology and a correct life.

There are few who will not admit that Scripture usage of the words God and Spirit should, in translating the Scriptures into any language, have large influence in deciding what words should represent them in that language. Further, there are few who will doubt that the selection of *Theos* and *Pneuma* by the translators of the Septuagint to represent *Elohim* and *Ruach*, furnishes an example for the selection of right words for God and Spirit in every other language. Hence, in addition to *Elohim* and *Ruach* in the Old Testament, we need to study the new words as used in the Septuagint, and as accepted and adopted by the Apostles

in the New Testament: and we need especially to study them in their heathen uses in the language and literature of Greece to guide us in finding the corresponding words which can be Christianized as these were. It is not similarity, or resemblance, or certain correspondences that is wanted, but identity of signification and use.

The importance of this subject may be gathered from the deep reverence with which the writers of the Old Testament speak of the Creator. "Who is like unto Thee O Lord, among the gods!" That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, Jehovah thy God."

What is the use, signification and application of *Elohim* (or *El Eloah**) in the Old Testament?

1. The primary signification is simply "god" without qualification. "Cry aloud for he is a god." "Jehovah is a God of gods." As the generic word for God, it admits of qualifying words, as the article and the adjective. "All ye gods." "Jehovah is greater than all the gods." Other gods." "Strange gods."

2. As the God the Hebrews worshipped was the Living and Eternal One, they naturally applied to Him the generic word meaning thereby the true God. Hence the secondary meaning—God, the true and only One. "Jehovah, He is the God." "Who is God save Jehovah?" It is God that girdeth me with strength."

3. Elohim is directly applied to false gods, both male and female. "Dagon our god." "Ashtaroth, goddess of the Amorites." "Cried every one unto his god." "Call upon thy God." "Gods of the hills and the valleys." Baalzebub, the god of Ekron."

---

* Elohim is used here in the singular and plural, and applied to both male and female deities, precisely as is "Shen" in Chinese.

4. It is applied to angels. "Worship him all ye angles." "A little lower than the angels." (*Elohim* in both.)

5. It is applied to men entrusted with power and authority. "I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh." "I said 'ye are gods'."

6. It is used as an adjective to express some great excellence, beauty or superiority. "Mountains of God." "Cedars of God." "A city great unto God."

The Seventy used *Theos* to represent *Elohim*, and this use is very closely followed by the New Testament writers. The foregoing examples show that *Elohim*—and its Greek equivalents equally so—is an absolute, generic term, and should be translated accordingly. It follows that the word in any language which includes these significations; which in its native uses and meanings is equivalent to these words in their native uses and meanings is the word by which to represent *Elohim* and *Theos* in that language. The God of Israel claimed superiority over all other gods, that there was but one and He was that one; although there were innumerable imaginary beings whose deluded worshippers claimed for them that honor. It became necessary therefore to distinguish between Him and the false gods of the Gentiles by qualifying sentences or differentiating words as, the God of Abraham; Lord God of Hosts; Almighty; Most High; Eternal; Holy; Creator. Further, He revealed a name which He appropriated to Himself—"I am Jehovah, that is my name." This is God's proper name and can be applied to no other. Its import is, eternal self-existence, concerning which, coupled with creatorship He says, "My glory will I not give to another." Hence the name of no other god can be applied to Him, even as His name can not be given to any other.

"Let it be understood at the outset that in the Chinese, "The same word serves indifferently as a noun, verb, adverb or adjective, or for any other subordinate purpose as may

please the speaker. Moods, tenses, persons, gender, and number are all lacking. Conjunctions, declensions, and the whole tribe of auxiliary verbs are conspicuous by their absence. A single character furnishes the root idea. All qualifications of it must be affected by the addition of other characters *" or gathered from the connection, and from its relation to the subject under consideration."

It has been said that a suitable word by which to translate *Elohim* and *Theos* into Chinese must be one so restricted in meaning that it is only applicable to God. This is an *impoossible* condition, for no language contains such a word. Honorable titles, and even names are continually being applied to inferior objects. In the Scriptures we have the expression, "ye are gods" applied to men. In over 140 places in the Bible, the word god is applied to idols, and even to devils.

Moreover, Christianizing a heathen word does not consist in giving it a new application for Scripture use, but in clothing it with the ideas and meanings which pertain to the Being whom it represents in the Bible. *Theos* lost none of its old heathen uses when taken to represent *Elohim* in the Septuagint, nor when Christianized in the New Testament use. But gathering together and retaining these, there were added many more and richer meanings when it became the conservator of its new and really spiritual significations, while yet it was capable of expressing all the ideas connected with the old mythology. All will concede that by the use of THEOS for the God of the Hebrews, "The Infinite One came in among the thousands of the gods of Greece without a capital letter or mark of any kind to distinguish Him:" this all depended on the connection aud subject matter. Christ and His Apostles approved and followed the example of the Seventy—with what result? "The thirty thousand gods

* C. Holcombe "The Real Chinaman."

of the Greeks, their splendid temples, images and ritual"—far surpassing anything in China—"fell before Him who said, 'my glory will I not give to another,' and there remains only the language in which they had been described, worshipped and sung." We have here a plain, common-sense mode of procedure set before us which we do well to follow. If a word is found in the general language of any people which in the main is equivalent—not to Christianized *Theos* in the New Testament, but—to *theos* in the general language of heathen Greece, *that is the word for God in that language.* Applied to a God foreign to Greek mythology, and to a system of religion in its nature simple, spiritual, pure and utterly opposed to the entire ethical system of the Greek idolatry, its old uses and compounds are gradually discarded and lost, while many new ones are employed in the service of the new religion.

Every language student knows that words used by different peoples to represent their highest conceptions of deity differ somewhat. Their definiteness is not equal: the personal element differs in degree: the spiritual and material elements in the general conception of deity varies: as does also the extent to which anthropomorphic or demonic characteristics constitute a part of their nature in the thought of the people. The mythology and demonology of a heathen people, the relation of these to, and their absorption of anthropomorphic ideas or elements must be studied, before one can understand the religious terms of a people, or have any clear conception of the proper use of those terms in teaching Christianity.

Most, if not all languages and peoples have one—and only one—generic word for deity, be their objects of worship one or many. *Elohim*, *Deus*, *Theos*, Dieu, Gott, and God are in point. One of these words has both a plural and a singular use, the number being determined by the construction, the connection, or both. It is believed, that "*Shen*" is the

corresponding word in Chinese. It has but one form, but is both singular and plural in use. When necesssry to a clear understanding, the adjectives "true" or "false" are perfixed. In this respect there is no difference between Greek and Latin usage of *Theos* and *Deus* other than that arising out of there being a singular and a plural form in these languages.

WHAT ARE THE USES OF "SHEN."

1. Every object of reverential worship is styled a "*shen*." So every object of worship in Greek was a *theos*, in Latin a *deus*. There are *shen* of the mountains, of the streams, of the doors and gates, of the seas, local *shen* innumerable, *shen* of fire, of wealth, of different diseases, of thunder, rain, of the kitchen, and others too numerous to mention. Sir Thomas Wade testifies that *shen* "is taken collectively for a multitude honored in China, after fashions more or less idolatrous: or individually of the personages more or less divine who constitute that multitude. What are habitually worshipped in China are *shen*: *Tien* is a *shen*: *Shangti* is a *shen*: *Kwanyin* is a *shen*, Buddha is a *shen*: and that the word *shen* includes *Shangti* and everyone somewhat less than *Shangti*." Dr. Legge evidently forgot this fact when he asserted that "*shen* only signifies spirit." In the *dictum* that "it is an inadmissible definition of '*god*' to say that it means an object of religious worship," he also forgot Johnson's definition quoted approvingly a little before: "God, the Supreme being, a false god, an idol, any person or thing deified, too much honored." It would appear from the above (see Wade) that "in the sense of God, a god, a goddess, and gods, as these words occur in the Scriptures, *shen* is the proper word to use in Chinese."

Most of these *shen* are represented by images in which the divinity is supposed to reside. Others are painted on

paper, or represented by a written character: while others, so far as I can learn, have no visible representation. In all this we have an almost perfect analogy to the use of *theos* in classic or heathen Greek. With similar objects of worship, the words by which they are known or described must correspond. In Greek they are *Theos-theoi*: in Chinese *shen* (singular or plural). If in Greek they are spirits and not gods then *theos* means spirit, not god, and the Seventy and the Apostles were wrong, and *shen* must follow *theos* and mean spirit and not god. But if they are gods, and not spirits simply, though having a spiritual nature attributed to them, then *theos* means God, god, and *shen* must follow *theos* and also mean God, god, gods; and to use *shen* in the sense of spirit is incorrect, confusing and misleading.

The Greeks deified not only heaven, but every object in heaven, visible and invisible, with all their supposed inherent powers and qualities. The same was true concerning the earth. Man also with all his inherent qualities and powers was deified: and all these separately and combined, were styled *theos*, *theoi*. With scarcely any variation, we find the same to be true among the Chinese, and to all is applied the term *shen*. The Greeks and Romans deified heroes—so do the Chinese: but the ethical system of the Chinese turns, not upon the duty of obedience to any god, but on filial piety; and so all ancestors are worshipped as were the heroes in Greece: and there is no more cause for wonder in the one case than in the other. And all *Deified* ancestors, with *Shangti*, are classed among the *shen*, just as Deified heroes, and *Zeus* and Hercules were classed among the *theoi*. The term for "to deify" is "*feng shen*" (封神), "to make or constitute a god." One fallacy of those who oppose the use of *shen* for God, gods, consists in trying to find a word corresponding to GOD: to Christianized *Theos*, not to heathen *theos*. Such a term does not exist in any *Unchristianized*

language. The Septuagint translators selected *Theos* to represent *Elohim:* it is not a name, but a generic word and they sought and found its equivalent. The *name* of no Grecian or Roman deity, however dignified, could fill the place. So of the New Testament writers. They spoke Aramaic, a modified form of Hebrew. They were acquainted with, and wrote in the Greek language. They knew their own Hebrew Scriptures, and guided by the Holy Spirit, they sought the equivalent of *Elohim* and not the *name* of the superior Greek deity by which to represent that term and Him who said, "All the gods of the nations are idols." This is significant, and we can not go amiss in following their example, or claim to be faithful transmitters of God's word and depart from that example, or attempt to transfer God's glory to any other name.

IT IS USED IMPERSONALLY.

2. Notice some of the impersonal uses of the term *shen*. We have the expression, "*T'ien shen yin ch'u wan wu*" (天神引出萬物) "the *shen* of heaven lead forth the myriad things" (all things.) What does *t'ien shen* mean? Here we get help from another expression, *t'ien ti wei shen*" "heaven and earth are *shen*," or "are divine." To render "heaven and earth are spirits" or "spiritual" would only provoke a smile from a Chinese. To him it means the divinity or the divine power supposed to reside in the heavens: the gods of heaven: or—since heaven and earth are divine, and heaven is to him the highest embodiment of power, greatness, divinity,—a correct rendering would be, "divine heaven, or the god—gods—of heaven lead forth all things." Let what was stated at the beginning not be forgotten, that "the same word serves indifferently" for all parts of speech, and is never modified or qualified as in English and other languages, save by the addition of another character. Hence, while the thought of two languages may

be quite the same, the Chinese will lack the definiteness of expression which is imparted to other languages by the article and other devices.

IT IS USED PERSONALLY.

3. Personal uses of *shen*. Dr. Legge says "the Chinese do not worship gods but spirits." Yet he acknowledges that the "inferior" *shangti* are gods, and as they are styled *shen he thus admits what he denies.* The objects of worship included under this head are gods and deities in general, angels, images, *i.e.*, the deity supposed to reside in the image, titled spirits, and deified men (the non-deified are 鬼 *kwe*). These and similar cases are cited by those who oppose the use of *shen* as the generic term for god, gods, which citations grant the whole question: for these beings styled *shen* correspond almost perfectly with the *theoi* of the Greeks, who worshiped or feared them as in some sense divine, precisely as the Chinese do their *shen*. Varro reckons no less than 30,000 adored within a small extent of territory. "Legion" is their name in China. A classification of ancient heathen deities—especially Grecian—published more than fifty years ago, might have been prepared for China to-day. 1. Created beings or spirits (angels, demons, lares, genii, et al.) 2. Heavenly bodies (sun, moon, etc.) 3. Elements (whirlwind.) 4. Meteors. 5. Minerals, fossils. 6. Plants. 7. Sea animals. 8. Insects. 9. Birds. 10. Beasts. 11. Deified men. 12. Human qualities and characteristics (strength, power, genius.) 13. Nature, the universe, (heaven, earth, Pan.) Every count in this list is applicable to China to-day in varying degree, and as in Greece they were all included under *theoi*, so in China they are all called *shen*. If *theoi* means gods, then *shen* means gods: if *shen* means spirits, then *theoi* means spirits. They are all objects of worship: are all styled *theoi*, *shen:* are taken from the whole

range of the natural and the supernatural: real and imaginary: are possessed of qualities the most opposite: celestial, terrestrial, marine: agreeable, repulsive, infernal: myths, and deified nature, and men. China and Greece meet on common ground, and the mythology of one, with little save in names and methods of observance might be exchanged with slight alteration on either part.

Those who oppose the use of *shen* for God admit, and have shown that it is used personally and impersonally as above cited, and I have also shown that theos is thus used in classic Greek. I challenge the production of a single instance in which *pneuma* and its compounds are used for things powerful, very able or superior, efficacious, superlative or inscrutable, "inscrutably intelligent:" for the human features or "form divine"; sweet or ineffable voice, et al. *Shen* is so used, and therefore it is not *pneuma*. *Shen* and its compounds are so used by their own showing by those who oppose its use for God: so is *Theos*: therefore *Shen* is *Theos*. And it may be remarked here that no instance can be shown where *Shangti* or its compounds are so used: nor can it, a specific name, be so applied. Hence while *Shangti* stands for a god among the gods, it is not god, generic. Dr. Medhurst has this significant remark as coming from a *Shangti* man: "There are writings in Chinese in which *shen* is so applied up and down that a man must be a fool to suppose it means anything else than god." About the year 1850, the Governor of Fukien published a geography in which he said, referring to the Persians, "as the source of life they carefully respect and sacrifice to the sun as the fire *shen*." "The Africans worship trees, birds, and beasts as *shen*." "The people of Guinea worship birds and beasts as *shen*." I submit that *shen* is rightly translated god (or gods) here, or objects of worship are not correctly styled gods in English: either this, or this Chinese provincial Governor did not know how to use his own language.

GENERAL USAGE OF THE TERM.

4. A few passages from Chinese writings will further illustrate the use of the term. In section 11 of the *Lun Yü*, Chi Lu asked how the *kwe shen* ought to be worshiped. The commentary explains *Kwe shen* thus; "heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, thunder, everything with which *ch'i* (air, breath, the creating principle) is connected, all these are called *shen*. Ancestors who are worshiped in the ancestral temple" (*i.e.*, undeified) "are called *kwe*." This makes *shen* a generic term including all the higher objects worshiped by the Chinese. *Kwe* includes all evil spirits, being the equivalent of *daimon* in Greek. (Sec. 3, Par. 12, *Lun Yu*:) 'Sacrifice as if present: sacrifice to the *shen* as if the *shen*, were present." The commentary says the first clause "refers to ancestors," the latter, "to the outside *shen*;" and then a further explanation adds, "the outside *shen* are the *shen* of the mountains, forests, streams" et al. Sec. 6, Par. 4, speaking of the yellow calf of a mottled cow says, "though it may not be used (in sacrifice), will the mountains and rivers reject it?" The commentary says, "mountains and rivers mean the *shen* of the mountains and rivers" and adds, "though men may not use, the *shen* will not reject; he is proper to use in sacrifice to the *shen* of the mountains and rivers." In the book of "Great Elegance" we read, (Sec. 1,) "Wen Wang is (or has gone) above:" "Wen Wang having died and his *shen* being on high"; "Wen Wang's *shen* is in heaven and constantly in the presence of *Shangti*." Wen Wang, deified was regarded as a *shen* as well as *Shangti*, and sacrificed to after his death by others than his descendants. This is not the case with the non-deified, whose spirits are styled *kwe*, *shen*.

In explaining the name "*Shangti*," the Chinese make him the chief of their *shen*. "*Shangti* is the *shen* of heaven:" "*Shangti* is heaven:" *Shangti* is the most

honorable of the *shen*:" "the greatest of the celestial *shen* is *Hao-t'ien* (Expansive Heaven) *Shangti*." When we find *Hao-t'ien Shangti* the *Shangti* of the classics and the chief object of Confucian worship; and *Yu-hwang Shangti* the chief object of Taoist worship, called *shen* and worshiped as *shen*; and all other objects of worship in the national rites and in the Taoist ritual designated and worshiped as *shen*, it seems impossible to say other than that if the Chinese have any gods, and if they have any term by which they designate them, then these *shen* are their gods and that *shen* is the common, generic term for these gods. The infelicity—not to say the error—of translating *shen* by spirit, is seen in such examples as this; "*t'ien shen* (*shen* of heaven) are most honorable, with whom none can be compared." In the "Mirror of History" it is said, "The king heard that in the West there is a *shen* called Buddha." The commentary on the Sacred Edicts, repeatedly calls Buddha "*Shen Fo*." In none of these places can *shen* be translated spirit. The characteristic mark of a god, that which distinguishes it from a mere spirit, is that reverence is paid to it by the highest act of worship in China, viz., sacrifice. Only beings styled *shen* are so worshiped: spirits as such are never so worshiped: hence the *shen* are not spirits. The *theoi* of the Greeks, the *dei* of the Romans, the gods of our forefathers, *Elohim* of the Old Testament, the *shen* of China, ALL have this in common—that the supremest form of worship is reserved for them. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it and worshipeth it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god." *Theos*, *deus*, *shen* is the *only* word in its respective language that can be placed in this connection.

We need just such a generic term as the Seventy and the Apostles found *theos* to be in the Greek, comprehensive and specific, embracing all the idols and objects to which

sacrifice was offered, and yet in the Bible no longer one of them: but coming for conquest to lead all their devotees away from them to Him who is over all; and such a term is shen.

Objections to the Term.

1. It is objected that *shen* is a degenerate, uncertain term, meaning spirit, spiritual and of doubtful signification. God is a spirit—His essential nature is spiritual. Every object of worship, even the most material, necessarily has a thought of the nature of spirit associated with it though the idea may be vague and far from that of pure spirit. But it does not follow that they are not distinct: nor that a term definitely signifying and comprehending all objects of worship, because it has been compounded, depreciated in use, and used of spiritual existences, should therefore be held to mean spirit and not god. If so then *theos* and god must be rejected in their present uses. No word in the Greek language is so flexible as *theos*, enters into so many combinations, helps to express such a variety of ideas or is applied to so many beings real and imaginary and differing so widely. There are over three hundred and fifty variations and compounds. But notwithstanding this apparent confusion and indefiniteness in use, the *Elohim* of the Bible was rendered *Theos*, and it brought order out of chaos. In like manner with *theos*, *shen* is very flexible, entering into combination with a large number of other characters, and helping the people to a multitude of ideas relating to things supernatural and divine: and so may *Elohim* be rendered in Chinese by *shen* with like results. The similarity between those beings whom the Seventy and the Apostles styled

---

Some have said that a generic term is not needed. The "Seventy" sought, and they and the Apostles used a generic. Why?—let the objector say. All languages have such a term. A correct translation of Scripture and presentation of truth cannot be made without it.

theoi, and those whom the Chinese style *shen* is so very remarkable that it can end in but one conclusion if parity of application, signification and usage have any weight.

Spiritual existences among the Chinese are included under two terms, *kwe* and *shen*, unles genii (*hsien* 先) be added. *Kwe* includes all evil spirits, and the spirits of all non-deified human beings, the latter being placated rather than worshiped. All these are feared; they are of inferior rank, and uncertain in locality and feelings. Unless placated, only evil is apprehended from their influences. They are the *daimones* of the Greeks. And note in passing that theos is never used for *daimon*. Above and superior to the *kwe* are the *shen*, which term includes all objects to which sacrifice, or the highest form of worship is offered. From these, good is supposed to be obtained by proper conduct and the observance of the rites. And as with *theos* and *daimon*, so here *shen* is never used for *kwe*. The ONE term which includes these and all spiritual existences, is "*Ling*." *No* spiritual existences other than objects of worship are designated by the term *shen*.

2. EVERY TERM REPRESENTING DEITY CONTAINS INHERENTLY THE IDEA OF SPIRIT OR SPIRITUAL—This is more or less developed according to the elevation of the people in the scale of human progress and the development of the spiritual sense. Occupying essentially the position in its linguistic environment which *Theos*, *Deus*, *God*, occupy, *Shen* is subject to like fluctuations, and must have the same essential signification. It remains to be proven that the degeneracy charged upon *shen* has been greater than in corresponding terms in other languages. The Chinese continually speak of man as a little heaven. There is a great heaven which has its Lord-ruler (主宰). Man, the little heaven, has his lord-director (主掌,) inferior of course to the Lord of the great heaven. This inner ruler or lord (*chu-chang*)

is often called their *shen*, and being the source of their power, energy, vigor, represents these ideas. *Ching-shen* is *now* physical energy, vigor. *Ching* refers to the nature or essence of any thing ; fine as opposed to inferior or coarse, and so the best condition ; perhaps the best the gods can give in our thought, and so a nature divine: but now simply natural vigor, "hearty." So we have *liu shen* (流 神), be careful, attentive. *Liu* means to hold back, detain. Probably the original thought was as a teacher says, "(may you be) restrained by the gods (from harm)," and has gradually come to mean, "have a care" simply. An equivalent expression is *liu hsin* (流 心) restrain the heart. Cases of corresponding, similar and allied uses of *shen* could be greatly multiplied: and we must not forget that a compound term often, if not generally, differs materially from its component parts taken separately.

All these ideas expressed by *shen* or a compound containing *shen*, are expressed in Greek by *theos*, *theoi* or their compounds: or by *daimon*, a god or divinity of inferior rank to *theos*. Events assigned to no praticular god were attributed to the *daimones*, the demons, of the N. T., the *kwe* of the Chinese. Similarly we have in English, God, divine, divinity: demon, devil, devilish: and in Latin, *Deus*, *divus*, *numen*. *Daimon* is often used for *theos*, the reverse never. Greek writers speak of their *theiotes* or *daimonion*— their divine or god-like nature, which corresponds to the Chinese *ching-shen* above. In English there is divine genius: the divinity within us: God in man: divinely fair: notes divine. *Shen* is also used of the human form and features. In Greek *theoides* means divine form or beauty, said of Paris and Telemachus. So that in the way of depreciation in sense-value, and deterioration in use, little more an be said against *shen* than against *theos*, *deus*, god, divine (and their compounds); while the correspondences are as nearly perfect as different languages and usages will permit.

3. IT IS FURTHER OBJECTED TO SHEN THAT IT HAS A VERBAL USE. Do not forget the varied uses of Chinese characters; and note: we have in Greek, *theomantes* to possess the prophetic gift or divine knowledge—to fully understand: *thespis thespizo*—inspired, to prophesy or divine. In Latin we find *divino*, in the sense of to understand, to divine "*quid futurum est non divino*" (Cicero). In English we have the same use, to divine, to theologize, to deify. I can not "divine" why *shen*, because having a verbal use sometimes as do multitudes of other nouns, (and having Greek correspondences), is therefore unfitted as a term by which to designate God.

Shen is also used in the sense of wonderful, inscrutable, power, efficacy or efficacious, ability, the general idea attaching to it being that of superiority, or superlative. In this there is close correspondence to Greek usage: *e.g.*, *theometis*, divinely wise: *thespesios*, divinely sweet, ineffable, referring to the voice: *theskalos*, god-like or marvelous things: *theoikelos*, form or fashion of the gods (applied to persons). Things great, marvelous, of superior excellence of the kind, men's deeds that are mighty, wonderful, powerful: incidents that are fearful, inexpressible, all are set forth by some compound of *theos*, just as *shen* has come to be used in China. Such a correspondence in the use of terms in two languages is very significant of what should be the usage in one when the other has Apostolic sanction, that having followed the still older example of the Seventy in choosing *theos* to represent *Elohim*. We also have a very similar use to that referred to of *shen* in China, by some English writers in the expression, "the divinity within us." As God or Divine means a great deal more to us than it did to our idolatrous ancestors centuries ago—more than *shen* ever meant to the Chinese, so this use of Divinity means more to us than the present deteriorated use of *shen* signifies to the present Chinese.

4. Granting all that can be said for *shen* in the sense of spirit, the essential meaning of the word uppermost in the mind of every Chinese is god, gods : an object or being to which sacrificial worship is offered. Even those who advocate its use in the sense of spirit, admit, its true signification by prefixing "*chen*" (眞) and "*chia*" (假), and recognizing the compound as the correct terms for the true God, and for false gods, thus establishing its absolute-generic property, and in this respect placing it along side God, *Theos*, *Elohim*. Hence to use it for spirit is to attach to it a double meaning, to introduce confusion and disorder, and is contrary to the *usus loquendi* of the Chinese language. There is no class of beings in China higher than the "*shen*" and this is the highest appellative noun in the language. Officers are appointed to attend to the rites in the worship of the *shen* among whom *Shangti*, and "Above-ruler" (or superior deity) mentioned in the Classics, is chief. No such appointment is made for the worship of a class called "*Ti*"—or any other class. If *Shangti* is a god and the other "*shen*" are only spirits, then he belonged to a different species, should be worshiped by different rites—should be worshiped alone : all of which is absolutely contrary to the facts. Further, it is said, "if *Shangti* were not a *shen*, it would be of no use to pray to him : and if he be a *shen* he can not be deceived." According to this Chinese dictum, he is an object of worship only because he is a "*shen*," and not because he is a "*ti*." If shen means only spirit, and the highest being known to the Chinese derives his right to worship, and his discerning intelligence from the fact that he is a "*shen*," which appellative denotes his nature, and not from his being a "*ti*" —(*Shangti*, his official title,)—then surely the Chinese have no higher class of beings than spirits, nor have they any word corresponding to *theos*, or that can be used for God, god, gods. Dr. Morrison in his dictionary defines *shen*,

"every evanescent, invisible, inscrutable, spiritual, operating power or cause is a *shen*; Divinity, God, Divine."

The real meaning of "*shen*" is well illustrated by an incident which occurred in Foochow in or about the year 1877. The question was raised whether the native Christians correctly understood the use of the term "*shen*" in the sense of spirit. It was therefore proposed to offer prizes for essays on the passage, "God is a spirit," taken from the version which uses *Shangti* for God, and *shen* for spirit—"*Shangti* is a *shen*." Two missionaries and a native preacher were chosen umpires. The gentleman who favored *Shangti* for God first read the essays—30 in number—and then passed them on, saying to his missionary colleague, "These men have all mistaken the meaning of *shen*, the text should be defined more clearly and given out again. That gentleman did not see the propriety of this. The object was to ascertain in what sense the Chinese Christians understood the word "*shen*" when unbiased, and this was fully attained. They all understood the passage to mean what it said, "*Shangti* is a god," and had so treated it. The three best essays being selected for the prizes and for publication, the first gentleman again proposed that a few changes be made before publication so as to attach the sense of "spirit to the term *shen*." The native preacher objected that "the writers knew what they were saying, and also knew their own language." This occurred twelve years after the mission (as a body) had changed from the use of *Shen* and *Ling* for God and Spirit, to that of *Shangti* and *Shen*, and after twelve years training of the native Christians in this latter usage. The unanimity of thirty essayists under these conditions needs no comment.

**Shangti* has been used by a large number of missionaries as an appellative for God. No one has set forth the advan-

* Careful conversation with many native Christians convinces me that very few understand the term "*Sheng Shen*" in any other sense than Holy God, or Holy (and) Divine. Give them the idea of spirit simply, and they will invariably use "*Ling*," and contend for it as the right word for spirit.

tages of this term, in brief, better than Dr. Milne, who intended to enlarge upon and prove his position from Chinese writings. Was it from lack of proof that he never did so? for we are told that "from first to last Marshman, Morrison, and Milne were uniform in the use of *shen* for God in translation and common parlance." His points are as follows: † 1. "*Shangti* has been used in China from the very earliest ages to denote 'the supreme ruler,' and its reverent continuance for over 4000 years deserves serious attention. 2. He is above celestial and terrestial gods in dignity and authority. 3. The sacrifices offered to him were always select and peculiar, and were referred to with more solemnity and seriousness in their books than were other sacrifices. 4. He is said to love and pity the people, to be angry with and punish tyrants and oppressors. 5. *Shangti* is used by all the three sects—Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist—in a way that indicates his supremacy. 6. He inspires great reverence in the Chinese mind. 7. He is not represented as having any other being who cooperates with him." 8. But he admits that "the Chinese language is not explicit in attributing self-existence, eternity, and unity to him": and 9. He further admits that several things here stated are also affirmed of heaven and of other *shen*.

It may be replied to 1 and 5 that *Shangti* correllates with *Hwangti*, Emperor, each being "supreme" in his own realm, *Shangti* over the *shen*, but not God *alone*, and *Hwangti* his vicegerent, the "Son of heaven," over men. 2. *Shangti* is heaven and heaven is *Shangti*. 3. The same sacrifices were offered to heaven, earth, and other superior deities, the only difference being, that those to *Shangti* took precedence in order of time.

† Somewhat abbreviated in language.

It is not necessary to discuss the question whether or not in ancient times the Chinese ever worshiped God under the name of *Shangti*: it has not been proven by the advocates of the theory. There is nothing in Chinese writings to show that *Shangti* was ever worshiped alone or independently as the only and true God; instead, he was always associated with other *shen* in worship. The important question is do the present-day Chinese attach such ideas to the name as to make it a fit term by which to render *Elohim* and *Theos*? However exalted formerly, or appropriate *per se*, I can not but believe after long and careful study, that it has fallen into the same category with Baal, once applied to God, then prohibited because prostituted as the name of idols and false gods: "and it shall be that in that day, thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt *no more* call me Baali, for I will take away the names of Baalim out of their mouth."

Note the following important facts. 1. *Shangti* is a cognomen simply, and unlike *theos* and *shen* has no flexibility whatever. It will not compound with any other word, and so has no variation of use or sense in a compound form. It never stands in any Chinese writing or use for God, god: it is *Shangti* and nothing else; a relative, not an absolute or generic term.

2. *Shangti* is the name of an idol. Dr. Medhurst gives a list of twenty-six "*ti*," of whom six are styled *Shangti*, and all, he admits, are called *shen*, and worshiped as were the *theoi*,: Temples dedicated to *Yü Hwang* (玉 黃) *Shangti* in which is his image and in which he is worshiped are found all over the empire. I have seen two temples or shrines with the simple inscription, "*Shangti Miao*" (廟 temple), in which were images, and I have heard of others. The term *Shangti* is well enough as to its signification: so was Baal (my Lord) till it became, as is *Shangti*, the name of images. The names differ; the images and the significance of their worship remain the

same and how can we be blameless if we apply the one name to God when He has forbidden the other? "Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."

The author of a very strong appeal for *Shangti* as against *shen* is constrained to admit it to be a "fact that when *Shangti* is used in preaching, if it is not explained as not referring to *Yü Hwang*, many people who have not been taught better will suppose that it refers to him": "that the term will be likely to be misunderstood unless explained that it does not refer to this idol." And he quotes a "native preacher of good abilities, who had preached the gospel to his countrymen for six years" as corroberating this statement. This—the right understanding of the natives, and the *mis*-understanding of the foreigner—is enough to condemn any term.

3. *Shangti is not God;* he does not represent God in the Chinese mind. Dr. Medhurst and other advocates of *Shangti* admit that "the Chinese have no knowledge of the true God": then *Shangti* is not god. What is needed is a term "which conveys to the Chinese mind the same idea that was conveyed to the Greek mind by *theos.*" Cudworth says, "the true and genuine idea of God is in general this: a perfect, conscious, understanding being (or mind), existing of itself from eternity, and the cause of all others things." *Shangti*—or any of its interchangeables (*t'ien, ti, t'ien-ti* 天,帝,) is not such a term, and does not represent such a being. (1) The claim that *Shangti* is self-existent is not found in any Chinese writings, nor fairly inferable from any Chinese usage. Dr. Medhurst admits that it is not claimed by any Chinese scholar. (2) No Chinese claims that *Shangti had any thing to do with the making of heaven and earth or the universe.* Instead, these were evolved in some mysterious way by the inter-working of certain eternal principles, "the

unlimited·" "the great extreme:" the dual "male and female principle." There is no explanation of the method by which or the time during which these principles inter-wrought in the production of all things: and not any intimation that *Shangti* had the least relation to their production. The clearest proof is needed on these two points before we can say that *Shangti* is God, or that the name can be applied to God. A mistake here is fatal: the least doubt is sufficient cause for rejection. "Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, . . . I am Jehovah: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." The connection is clear that "My glory" is creatorship and self-existence, neither of which is ever attributed to *Shangti* by Chinese writers. Mr. T. T. Meadows, a former British Consul, when passing a shrine, in company with the late S. Wells Williams, over which was inscribed, "Old Temple of *Shangti*," remarked, "it is a marvel to me how any missionary can use that word to preach the name of God." (3) It is admitted by all that heaven and *Shangti* are interchangeable terms. Dr. Legge says "heaven is styled *Shangti*, and as frequently *ti* without the *shang*. That addition, meaning 'supreme,' individualizes and exalts the *ti*. The names *t'ien*, *ti*, and *Shangti* are constantly interchanged." Dr. Legge further thinks "that the relation of the two names, *t'ien*, *ti* (天, 帝) (heaven, and *ti* "a ruler in his own right") has kept the monotheistic element prominent in the religion of China down to the present time, and prevented the prostitution of the name *ti* as *Deus* and other corresponding appellations of the Divine being were prostituted." (a) Note, that this writer is continually insisting on the monotheism of China while recognizing a host of beings to whom sacrifice is offered. From the statutes of the Ming dynasty, referring to what he chooses to call "earthly spirits," he translates: "The spirits (*shen*) of the mountains and hills, of the four

seas and the four great rivers, of the imperial domain, and of all the hills and rivers under the sky—it is yours, O Spirits (*shen*) each to preside as guardian over one district." To all these, worship and sacrifice are offered at the stated times. I can not "divine" the difference between these "*shen*" and the similarly presiding and worshiped "*theoi*" of the Greek mythology. Were *theoi* gods or only spirits?

From the *Shu Ching*, when *Shun* received the kingdom, Dr. Legge translates, "He sacrificed specially, but with the ordinary forms to God (*Shangti*); sacrificed purely to the six objects of honor; offered their appropriate sacrifices to the hills and rivers, and extended his worship to the host of spirits" (*shen*). This "extended worship" he explains as "understood of all spirits not attended to in his previous sacrifices, 'those' it is said 'presiding over mounds, dykes, plains and forests, and the spirits (*Shen*) of the sages and worthies of ancient times;" *i.e.* deified men as well as other objects of sacrificial worship styled "*shen*." Thus while Shun "extended worship" like the Athenians lest any *shen* be omitted, the writer adds, "Thus in the worship of the sage Shun, we see the primitive monotheism of the race;" and asserts "this interior worship was subordinate to the worship due to God: *i.e.*, to *Shangti*. This "inferior worship" was sacrifice, the highest embodiment of worship, such as was only offered to the *theoi* in Greece, not to the *pneuma*: wherein lies the difference in China? for there is nothing higher or more honorable than the *shen*. This does not comport with one of God's characteristics, viz., His "jealously" or abhorrence of false gods. Of images and false gods Jehovah says, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." *Shangti* has no such feeling, nor is such a thought shadowed in Chinese writings. The monotheism of the Bible was thus safeguarded, but it is not so as to *Shangti*. He may stand at the head just as

did *Zeus*, but he shares equal honors with a host of other *shen*. Dr. Medhurst says, "At the great sacrifice, of the rulers by the present dynasty at the winter solstice, an altar is elevated at the southern side of the capital, round, three stories high, the top of which—the place of honor—is intended for the shrine of *Shangti* or *Ti*: having the shrines of the Imperial Ancestors arranged on the right and left hand. While the fumes of incense are ascending the Emperor offers incense with three kneelings and nine prostrations: this done he goes towards the shrine of the Imperial Ancestors arranged on each side of the high altar, and offers incense with three kneelings and nine prostrations. The same ceremonies are gone through with regard to the offerings, which are first presented before the shrine of *Shangti*, and then before those dedicated to the Imperial Ancestors." Observe that the respect shown and the worship offered to the Imperial Ancestors and to *Shangti*, differ in nothing: their shrines are on the same elevation: incense is burned equally: three kneelings and nine prostrations to each: surely, if the Emperor had the least knowledge of the self-existent Jehovah, he could not elevate them to the same rank and give them equal honors. With *Shangti*, "heaven, earth, and ancestors, as objects of worship of equal dignity, are placed on a level," "to which the 'great sacrifices' are offered" according to Morrison. All these advocates show by their own writings, that there is absolutely no difference save in the precedence—all reverence, honors and offerings are the same. Speaking of "the principal or imperial sacrifices" M. Visdelou has this; "there is one for heaven, for the earth, and the ancestors of the emperors: for the tutelary *shen* of arable lands and the grains: these are sacrificed to at the same time. There are also sacrifices for the five principal mountains, for the five tutelary mountains, for the four seas, and the four rivers." When we are further told that

'expansive heaven" was worshiped under the title of *Shangti*: that heaven and *Shangti* are equivalent and interchangeable terms: and that the rites by which all these were worshiped were precisely the same, wherein is the superiority of *Shangti*? wherein is he "jealous"? wherein is he the alone ONE?

Wherein is found the monotheism of China? We are told that in early times the Chinese had much more knowledge of God than they have now, and a sentence is quoted from chap. 5. sec. 4 of the Book of Diagrams; "the Ti, (supreme) Ruler, (causes things to) issue forth under the *chen* (震) diagram." Observe that "Supreme" and "causes things to" are supplied by the translator. It should be "the Ruler issues forth under the *chin* diagram," "corresponding to the commencement of spring." While they thus supply and interpret "*Ti*"—"Ruler"—as referring to *Shangti*, Visdelou tells us rightly that "the ancient interpreters understood by it the Emperor Fu-hi."

When *Shun* would announce to heaven his association with *Yao* on the throne "he offered sacrifice to *Shangti*: he presented a pure offering to the six venerable ones, he looked with devotion towards the hills and rivers, and glanced around at the host of *shen*." * Little can be said for this ancient knowledge of God when *Shun* worshiped "expansive heaven" under the title "*Shangti*," added the worship of "the six venerable ones", viz. 1. the four seasons, 2. heat and cold, 3. the sun, 4. moon, 5. the stars, 6. drought, and still further descended to the earth and worshiped the hills and rivers, and a host of other *shen*: there is no hint of monotheism.

(*a*) Dr. Legge *asserts the monotheism* of the "Ancient Chinese" as far back as 5000 years, and adds, "how it was with them more than 5000 years ago, we have no means of

* Medhurst's translation is more correct than Legge's—p. 2.

knowing." Aside from the fact that equally careful and able investigators utterly dissent from this monotheistic view, and that the foregoing quotations concede the point which he asserts but fails to prove, observe that if the Chinese were monotheists at that early period, and maintained it for a period of years as he claims, there was no need for the call of Abraham to establish a monotheistic nation. If they were monotheists at the time Dr. Legge asserts, they must have been such for a long period of years previously: for history shows that a people lapse into idolatry more easily than it emerges out of it; and it is very strange that there is no record of the fact in or out of the Word when that was the kind of nation God wanted. Moreover, if they continued monotheistic 'for a period of years' then it is stranger still why Abraham was called to form such a nation, when according to our author, here was a nation ready to hand, and had been for years, purer and freer from idolatry than Israel was in less than 1000 years after the call. It is simply incredible: God does not thus waste His forces. *Shangti* does not, and never did represent to the Chinese mind that which God and *Elohim* represent to the Christian and Hebrew mind, any more than did *Zeus* and Jupiter to the Greek and Roman mind; which names, though representing the supreme in their mythology and among their deities, did not represent *Elohim*, and could not be substituted as a name for Him who styled Himself "I am."

(b) Dr. Legge claims that "*Ti*" *has not been prostituted* like *Deus* and other appellations of the Divine Being. He admits that "*Ti* enters into the name of the Emperor of China." That "it was applied to deified men," *e.g.*, *Fuh-Hi*, and others. That it is also prostituted to mean heaven, which is its equal and interchangeable. It has been applied to a number of Taoist gods as well as to the six *Shangti* whom Dr. Legge admits among the *shen*, and himself styles,

gods. The god of war was deified by the name of *Kwan-ti*, and described by he title *Hsien t'ien* (協天) "assistant"* inscribed on the banner in the great procession when he was taken out for his annual circuit about the city. Later this was changed to *P'ing T'ien* (平天) "the equal of heaven," which of course means the equal of heaven's equivalent, *Shangti*. It would be difficult to find a term referring to the gods or that ever did so refer, or to any one of them, in the Chinese mind which has been worse prostituted. The true signification of the term is, Ruler (*ti* 帝), one who rules ("in his own right,") Morrison's dictionary gives "one who judges or rules over the nations: with '*shang*' the highest sovereign, heaven," and adds, "(天之神) *T'ien tsz shen*, the god of heaven; others, the gods of heaven collectively." Shangti he defines, "High, supreme—is however applied to more than one divine personage." Hence, a name given to many gods, or even to one other, can not be applied to the one only true God. The compound word means the "over" or "above-Emperor," and is correllated with *Hwangti* the "son of Heaven," and the ruler of "all under heaven:" and as the latter is supposed to be supreme "under heaven" and over men, so is his correllate among the *shen*, among whom he is chief. A few passages will help to elucidate the matter. In the *Chung Rung* Section 19 we are told "The *Chiao Shë* (郊社) is the ceremony by which they worship *Shangti*." The commentary explains," the *Chiao* is a sacrifice to heaven (郊), the *Shë* a sacrifice to earth (社)," from which it appears that *Shangti* is the same as heaven and earth. The Ho Ching (合講) explains more fully: "In winter they sacrifice to heaven, and in the summer to the earth, and thus worship *Shangti*, and make the sincere reverence by which they honor Heaven and Earth an offering in return for their begetting and perfecting virtues." In the *Shang Meng* is a

---

* Signifying inferiority to heaven.

passage in explanation—chap. 2, par. 3—which has been translated, "Heaven produced mankind, but could not himself govern them, therefore he ordained rulers to govern: he could not himself instruct them, and therefore ordained teachers to instruct. His intention was that rulers and teachers should, in the name (or place) of heaven carry forward the principles of reason in order to do what *Shangti* was not able to accomplish." First, it is heaven that is not able to rule and teach, and so rulers and teachers are appointed to assist and complete what, not heaven, as above, but what *Shangti* was not able to accomplish. Thus heaven and *Shangti* are one and the same. Further, it reveals the low views of the sages—the "ancients"—regarding the power of their highest deity when he has to appoint and depend upon men for the completion of his plans. How unlike the God of the Bible.

4. The relation of *Shangti* to, and his place in the nature cult of China, forbid the use of his name to designate Him who is "over all God blessed forever." Heaven or *Shangti* stands at the head of this cult, and with him is associated earth, sun and moon. At the winter solstice the sacrifice is offered at the altar to heaven: at the summer solstice at the altar to earth—Father Heaven, Mother Earth, the male and female principle, or the powers of nature, embodied in *Shangti* as indicated in the quotations above. Only "The Son of Heaven" or his deputy can perform this worship, for he is the only representative of heaven on earth. Concerning this worship, Morrison says, "The ceremonies of this grand worship of nature, this natural religion, consist in bowing, kneeling and knocking the head against the ground. In those sacrifices in which the Emperor officiates *in propria persona*, he never knocks his head against the ground. What he requires of the greatest monarch on earth, he will not give to the greatest, 'supremest'

thing that he worships. The three kneelings and nine knockings of the head against the ground, he turns into three kneelings and nine bows. The knocking or the bowing seems to make a material, or rather a *feeling* difference in the estimate of his Majesty." Observe that Morrison calls the object of worship here, *Shangti*, the "supremest" object known to Chinese classics and religion, a "thing:" it is not God to one who yet desires to call God *Shangti*, but a "*thing*." Observe also that the Emperor holds the reverence due to himself in higher regard than that due to the object of his own worship. Could this be so if he recognized in *Shangti* the Creator, Jehovah? As shown in quotations from Dr. Legge and others, all the powers and operations of nature and a host of other *shen* are worshiped at the same time, in connection with, and by the same rites with which sacrifice is offered to *Shangti* or heaven. He stands to the Chinese as *Zeus*, Jupiter or Thor did to the nations in which they were the chief deities. He is simply the head of a great nature cult, ranging from heaven which is *Shangti* par excellence, down through all the host of inferior *shen*, many of whom are deified men and powers and attributes of nature. An incident drawn from experience may well close this part of the presentation and will add force to the above quotations. In the spring of 1864 two missionaries went to the temple of Kwanti to witness the start of his annual procession about the city of Tientsin. While waiting in the temple courts for the start, the time was spent in preaching to the crowd. As one brother preached of *Shangti*, the people said, 'we also worship *Shangti*—it is all the same doctrine.' 'No,' said he, 'it is the true, the only *Shangti* of whom I speak.' 'We worship the same' was the reply, 'there is no difference.' Listening for

a time to this, the other brother withdrew to a different part of the court and began to speak of the one true *Shen*. 'What shen is that they asked.' It was easy to tell them of the self-existent, omnipotent Creator, the Heavenly Father. 'That is good' they said, 'tell us about Him.' And so with no controversy, but with occasional questions, the mission and work of Jesus Christ, the manifestation of the Father's love was told to listening ears. Similar experiences of many workers has confirmed a conviction that came to the writer on first visiting a large temple in Shanghai in which was an image of *Yü Hwang Shangti*. Careful study and observation have only strengthened that conviction. Much stress has been laid by some upon "*Shangti* of the Classic," but I am equally convinced, and have never found any evidence to the contrary from Chinese literature or from conversation with educated Chinese whose minds had not been biased by those who read God into *Shangti*, that in Chinese thought, he never corresponded to the *Elohim* of the Bible and that we do wrong when we try to give His "Praise to graven images." An earlier experience will further illustrate the danger referred to. "In the winter of 1845-46, an inquirer presented himself to a missionary in Shanghai, and was taken under instruction as a candidate for baptism. The missionary impressed upon him the importauce of daily prayer to "*Shangti*:" but what was his grief after some three weeks had elapsed, to find that his inquirer had so misapprehended what was intended by the exhortations to worship *Shangti*, that he had for three weeks been in the practise of going daily to worship an idol in a temple in Shanghai, supposing it to be the *Shangti* meant by the missionary." Another missionary (in Ningpo) living in a temple in which was an "idol called *Shangti*, on the birthday of that idol received a special card of invitation 'to be present with offerings,' as being a devout worshiper from afar."

* In order to a satisfactory translation of the Scriptures into Chinese such as the Seventy made of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek, we must have an absolute-generic term : a term that includes every object of worship, just as "man" includes every one of humankind, all and each, while yet each is relegated to its own place among the many by its own individual characteristics and powers. Such a term was *Theos* in Greek : such a term is *Shen* in Chinese : like *theos*, flexible, rich and varied in its compound forms, capable of differentiating the living and true God from all others when brought in Biblical relations and usage, and yet relegating the myraid of false gods to their own place in Chinese mythology as did *Theos* in Greek mythology. And whatever difficulties attach to it, we have seen that very similar ones pertained to heathen *theos* and it overcame them : and so will *shen*. And as with *theos* in Greek, so with *shen* in Chinese, there is no other term which can fill this place.

---

* An argument to "push" *Shangti* was made in 1877 under the plea that the support given to *Shangti* is "four times greater than to all the other terms put together." (1) The Manager of the Presbyterian Press, Shanghai, has shown that this statement is not borne out by facts as regards Protestants. (2) No notice is taken of the Greek and Roman communions. They outnumber us many-fold, and they strongly disapprove the term *Shangti*. A few years ago the Christians of a certain village connected with the Roman church, having read the New Testament and other books carefully, all joined the Protestant church. Later, because of proximity and for the sake of economy, it was proposed to transfer them to another Protestant mission which used *Shangti* for God : they were very unwilling, "because they said *Shangti* is an idol, and not God." (3) Some *Shangti* advocates will not permit their books to be printed, and their presses will not print any book, in any other term. Hence, (4) some otherwise excellent books have but a limited circulation, because many who would use them extensively can not get them in the desired term. (5) The *Shen* party has tried to secure greater uniformity of practice by compromise, and so weakened its cause : but the *Shangti* party has steadily refused to give up either *Shangti* for God or *Shen* for Spirit, or yield a particle for unity : and so it is the latter, and not the "minority" that is chargeable with "a covert though bold attempt at pushing" a term in any such manner as above indicated. Their one condition of unity has been "Come and join us and we will be united."

The Use of T'ien Chu.

Another term which has found favor with some is *T'ien Chu* (天主), used by the Greek and Roman churches for God. To this term many of the native Christians object because of the bad odor attaching to the church of Rome all over the Empire. And they have much cause for this feeling; for when men of known bad character can place themselves beyond the reach of law by uniting with this powerful organization backed by France, men of good and honest aspirations will hesitate to assume any symbol which will appear to connect them in any way with such characters. Many missionaries sympathize in this feeling. Yet we all recognize one Savior, and it is possible to carry this feeling too far. A greater objection to this compound term is its use in Chinese in the sense of *heaven*—not "Heaven's Lord" unless explained. I have often spent much time in trying to explain the term, going over the ground again and again as the hearer adverted to his old position: and as often at the last his assertion and belief was, "(your) meaning is 'Heaven is Lord'." A term that is so readily, and in many cases so persisently misunderstood, does not commend itself as a proper term by which to represent God. And even though it be accepted as satisfactory for occasional use in certain connections, it is not flexible; is not absolute-generic, and can never from its very nature become a substitute for *Theos*, or in any real and proper sense represent it.

The Use of Shang Chu.

Still another term which of late is commending itself to many is *Shang Chu* (上主). Meaning "Lord Above;" and having no objectionable relations or uses in Chinese, it may well be used for "Supreme" while there are "Lords many," this would represent Him who is "above" or "over" all. It is not flexible to enter into combination,

nor is it absolute—generic; it is simply *Shang Chu* and can not translate *Theos*. Many have hoped that all parties would unite on this term as a designation of God and so get one step nearer unity; but so long as many are willing or determined to use the name of one image—*Shangti*—for the true God, and to pervert *shen* from its real signification—"god,"—to an inferred meaning—"spirit,"—this hope is deferred. Unobjectionable as a compound term in sense or use, *Shang Chu* might well be taken to represent God in the sense of "The Supreme:" and it would be a great gain if all could come together here. Such a step would be in the right direction, and would surely be approved of God and secure His blessing.

The Term for Holy Spirit.

The term by which *Pneuma* should be translated is also important. Reasons will have already become apparent to the careful reader for using "*ling*" rather than "*shen*" for this purpose. Morrison in his dictionary defines *ling*, "Spiritual: the subtle ethereal part of *Yang* (the male principle), is *shen*, Divine: the ethereal part of *Yin* (the female principle) is *ling*, Spiritual." Here we have the meaning of *shen* and *ling* well stated side by side—Divine," "Spiritual:" God, Spirit. He puts the two characters together, "*shen ling*, Spiritual: Divine."

It is objected to the use of *ling* for Spirit, that it is impersonal—only an influence, conveying no idea or sense of personality. Granting the statement, what of *pneuma* which it is to represent? It means wind, breath, life, spirit. In its primary signification of wind, breath, there is nothing of personality. It was only after it was Christianized and became a Biblical term that it took on the full personality which we now attach to it, more intense than its personality in heathen use. And yet even in its Christian use we often

refer to its operation as though it were an influence instead of a personality, as in Acts 8: 39, the divine influence or afflatus which rested on Philip and hurried him away. But for the personality put into the term by its Christian usage in connection with a personal God, we would naturally read, "a spiritual influence or afflatus," an impulse that constrained him thus to act. The native use of *pneuma* and its compounds was all along the line of "a breathing," "an influence," an impersonal impulse having relation to wind or breath. And it is only the Christianized *pneuma* that takes on a personal element. We have *pneumatizo* "to fan by breathing: to write or speak with the breathing *spiritus*;" and similarly all its compounds. Liddell and Scott gives (4) "a spirit, Spiritual being," and marks it N.T.

The use of "*ling*" in Chinese writings corresponds very closely with that of *pneuma* in Greek. Its essential meaning is spiritual, carrying with it the idea of excellent, superior, intelligent, effective, immaterial. In the *Tsung Rung* Sec. 16, occurs this expression; "The divine spirit (*shen ling*) surrounds him: whatever he does must prosper." "(*Ling shen*) a spiritual deity can not be comprehended" or measured.) Again, "at the time of sacrifice, the *ling* of the *kwe shen* (鬼神 the spirit, or spirit, or spiritual influence, of the gods) can cause all men to sacrifice according to what is proper." The *ling* of the *kwe shen* is bright" or luminous. *Kwe daimon* is sometimes used for *shen*, though with a meaning less intense than shen, and is here associated with *shen* to include every spiritual existence or inferior deity which can (supposably) illumine or be helpful to man. These passages show that *ling* has a very close correspondence in use to that of *pneuma*, and can with equal propriety be applied to the Holy Spirit. "The spiritual part (*ling ch'u*) of breath is called *kwe shen* (divine)." Referring to the pervading influence of the gods, "thus is seen their

ling ch'u (spirituality)." *"*Kwe* is the *ling* (spirit) of the *yin* (陰 female principle): *shen* (god) is the *ling* of the *yang* (陽 male principle)." The following are found in Kanghi's dictionary: "the ethereal breath of *yin* is called *ling*." "*Shen* is *ling*,"† (god is—or gods are—spiritual). The use of *ling* in these passages is in complete correspondence with that of *Ruach* in Isa. 31 : 3, "Their horses are flesh and not spirit."

Ling is also applied to the spirits of men as is *pneuma* in Greek. "The former spirits (*hsien ling* 先靈) are above, it is improper not to be sincere and reverent," "Sacrifices give peace to the former spirits (*ling*)." The explanation is, "The 'former spirits' are the spirits of ancestors." The impropriety of translating *shen* in any of the above passages by 'spirit' or, 'spiritual' is very apparent. Nor can *ling* with any propriety be translated by any other word. Passages abound showing the close conformity between the heathen *usus loquendi* of *theos* and *pneuma* in Greek, and *shen* and *ling* in Chinese.

I will close this paper with the testimony of a dear native brother long since gone to his rest. He was well educated, earnest, devoted and a diligent and careful student of the Bible and Christian books. He belonged to a communion which invariable used *Shangti* for God and *shen* for Spirit. But as he grew in grace and in the knowledge of the deep things of God, he more and more deprecated their use, and often opened his mind, unsolicited, to the writer on this subject. His contention was, that "you can not dissociate *Shangti* in the Chinese mind from its connection in the Chinese books, in the national cult, and in ordinary use. It

---

* *Kwe*, An inferior title for deity or divine, applied to the female principle according to Chinese ideas of the inferiority of the female.

† Both nouns are singular or plural, and the connection indicates the number: god is a spirit,—or, gods are spirits—or spiritual.

never meant the one living and true God, and is an idolatrous term. A sound theology can not be built upon it, for you can not read into it a meaning which it never contained. It can not create or preserve a definite faith, nor a strong, positive character such as constitutes an earnest, devoted, spiritual church, able to endure persecution and to contend with the errors of China, some of which are involved in the term itself." He said there were several terms which could appropriately be used in certain connections, but that *sehn* was the only word by which to translate God; a term which included all gods or objects of worship; which by the prefix of "*chen*" or "*chia*" unmistakeably distinguished the true from the false, a contrast impossible to make in any other way. As a correllary to this he added, "from this you see that *shen* should not be used as the designation of the Holy Spirit, because (1) it gives to it a signification not belonging to it, though spirituality pertains to deity: and (2) it uses it in two different senses, for one of which (deity) there is no other term, and for the other of which (spirit) there is a proper term (*ling*)." This briefly, and as nearly as possible in his own words, is a valuable testimony: and coming from one of his standing both as a Chinese scholar and earnest Christian, is worthy of careful consideration by everyone desirous of founding a pure church, free from idolatrous taint and materialistic speculation.

In conclusion. My aim in collecting the results of my study in this form, has been simply to present certain facts in such a way if possible, as to lead others—especially the younger missionaries—to examine the whole question in a quiet, reverential manner, as becomes so important a subject: seeking light from Chinese history, classics, and current use: from the course of the Apostles and their writings and current use: from facts and practice in the past and in other lands: and especially in prayer that God will

save them from biased influences and inferences, and guide their judgments and usage for His best service. Let us have no controversy ; only a reverent, careful, weighing and judging of the facts as before God, each for himself in the quiet place of study and prayer, in their bearing on the propagation of a pure Christianity in China. And may the God of peace guide all to His own praise and glory !

Appendix.

AN OPEN LETTER.

To Thomas Cochrane, Esq., M. B., C. M., *Chairman of the Peking Committee on Union.**

Dear Sir: I learn from the circular you sent me that a committee has been formed in Peking to secure that the word for God shall be translated by the word Shangti in all the Chinese Christian literature.

You wish me to assist you in appointing a member of each mission to help you to accomplish your object. I have waited a long time, carefully considering the subject, wishing, if possible, to see all united in this vital matter.

I have carefully re-examined the places in the Chinese classics, where Dr. Legge translates the name Shangti into English with the English word God; I have read the unanswerable argument of the late Bishop Russell, and the recently published and equally able article from the pen of Dr. Stanley. I have examined its use in the books prepared by those who translate God into the Chinese language with the Chinese word Shangti.

After all I can but believe as I ever have, and as Mr. Warren says, "上帝 is not a translation of God," and he claims that all concede it. †

Take all the passages where the name Shangti occurs in the Chinese ancient writings, and there is no evidence, either from the circumstances or the connection, that I can see, to make one suppose that the Chinese ever meant our God when they said or sacrificed to Shangti. They did ascribe to him more of the attributes of divinity than did the

* The Recorder August 1905. Shows the animus and purpose of the Federation.

† May Recorder, 1904, page 216.

ancients to Jupiter; nevertheless he stands out clearly as the chief of the Chinese pantheon—the Jupiter of China.

Take the noted and much quoted passage from the Shoo King, First Book, third chapter and sixth verse: 肆類于上帝, 禋于六宗, 望于山川, 徧于群神.

The Emperor Shun is represented as sacrificing to Shangti, the six tsung (宗), the gods of the hills and rivers and to all the other gods. Here a heathen emperor is seen sacrificing to his heathen gods, among which is Shangti.

In the Shih King, iii. 11, we read that "She (Kiang Yuan) trod on a toe-print made by Shangti and was moved . . . She became pregnant," etc.

This is much like many a story in ancient mythology; but we do not recognize, in this picture, our God.

When Drs. Gutzlaff and Medhurst decided to use Shangti for God, they did not think that Shangti was the word in the Chinese language that meant god or God. Dr. Medhurst says in his dictionary: "The Chinese themselves for gods and invisible beings in general use Shen." * They thought that the Chinese ascribed to Shangti more of the attributes of God than to any other of their almost innumerable deities, and that his name would bring up more of the ideas connected with the true divinity than any other word in their language. It seemed plausible, but was a mistake; their position is untenable. Some think Shangti means the Supreme Being or the Supreme Ruler and use the word in this sense only, and without reference to its meaning an imaginary being, a false god, worshipped by the Chinese. You will surely agree with me that there are other words in the Chinese language with which we can express the idea of God's universal sovereignty without predicating of this entirely imaginary being what can only be predicated of God.

---

* Medhurst's Dictionary, page 631.

Here is a being, that it seems to me, every one who knows anything of the subject must class with the ancient heathen deities, with the heathen gods that our ancestors worshipped, and agree with me that he has no existence and never had, except in the imaginations of the heathen who worship him. Is it not like blasphemy to call him our God? To say he "created all things," that "he is the father of our Lord," seems to me like saying things that are not so.

I believe some who use the word Shangti for God, think of it only as meaning the "supreme ruler." It is, without doubt, to the heathen their chief god—their supreme ruler, or, as the Bishop of Victoria calls him, "high sovereign," the Chinese Jupiter. Jupiter is derived from words meaning heavenly father, * and we have the example of the inspired Apostles who, so far as we know never, when they wished to say "Heavenly Father," called Him Jupiter.

If when one first arrives in China his seniors tell him that the word for God, in the Chinese language, is Shangti; that some use Shen, but it is a word that the Chinese apply to a lot of inferior deities, that Shangti is their chief god, that they regard him as the ruler of the universe; if surrounded by those who used Shangti in all their prayers and preaching, in their Bible and all their literature, he would at once commence to use Shangti even in his private prayers and to think of God as Shangti, and as soon as he could utter a few words in the Chinese language would commence in stammering tones to try to exhort people to worship Shangti. As the years go by the usage becomes strongly intrenched in one's habits and is hard to break off, even when under other circumstances one is convinced that Shangti does not mean God and that it is very wrong to say he is.

---

† The Standard American Encyclopedia, page 1,461.

In your conference you agreed that Shen should be "used as the generic term for God." This is in accordance with pretty general usage. The Mandarin New Testament has been published for some twenty or thirty years with Shen for God and gods in both the Shang-ti and Tien-chu versions, and generally used in nearly all parts of the empire. In the Shangti version the Holy Spirit is Holy Shen, that is, Holy false god. The fact that it has been used for nearly thirty years, with scarcely a word of objection, is proof of the truth of what you say in the circular, viz., that it does not appear to the new generation of missionaries "a vital matter of conscience." I think it shows too, not only that they do not make it a matter of conscience, but how readily they take whatever is given them. If they make anything a matter of conscience, should it not be what god they worship?

In such sentences as the following Shen is generally used by all parties: "You worship false gods, but we wish to teach you to worship the true God." For "gods" or "God," Shangti could not be used and make sense.

If the first commandment were translated, "Thou shalt have no other Shangti before me," it would be meaningless and would not prohibit the worship of false deities.

Shangti has been sacrificed to by the heathen emperors of China from remote ages, and is still sacrificed to by the present heathen emperor, and is from this fact as well as the attributes ascribed to him, a heathen deity. How wrong it must be to predicate of him, or of any other thing in the universe, what can only be predicated of God!

But aside from all this, even if you were right in saying that Shangti is God and could teach Christianity in that way, do you think it would be right for you and those associated with you to take from your fellow-labourers the liberty of speech? If successful in preventing us from

having Bibles and other Christian literature now, the same spirit would lead you, not long hence, to take away the liberty of speech and tell us what words we may be allowed to speak. Even now, I can not but note, you say in your Resolution, "all missionaries to be left free to employ such terms as they see fit in preaching." I suppose there are not a few among those who do not agree with you, who will question the right of the Pei-ta-ho Conference, or the Peking Committee on Union, to tell them what words they *may* or *may not* use. How large this number is it may be difficult to say. I understand that Shangti is not approved by the Nestorians, the Mohammedans, the Roman Catholics and Greek Church as well as by a respectable section of the Protestants. How many of the latter it is difficult to say. You lay some stress upon a concensus of opinion you took. It may be well to remember that many would not notice such a circular; and brief replies, sometimes only yes or no, are hardly satisfactory. However, taking it for what it is worth, we learn from a consensus of opinion taken in 1894 that less than half of the missionaries adhered to Shangti *only* for God, and more than half used Sheng-ling for Holy Spirit. This is drawn from 351 answers. "Coming from all parts of China and representing quite generally all the different missions."*

But however small the minority, if it were but one person, I can not think it would be right for you, and those associated with you, to take this course.

Why do you take all this trouble about the words used by others? Should not Christians be supposed to have a conscience and be left free to cultivate it? To us you seem to predicate of Shangti (surely a heathen deity) what can only, with truth, be predicated of God. But this is a matter

* The Chinese Recorder 1894, page 552.

concerning which everyone must have freedom of will, or he could not be held responsible. If you are satisfied to say Shen 神 means spirit, and use it at the same time and in the same copy of the Bible for false gods and for Spirit, in the term Holy Spirit, making it to mean, according to your Bible, Holy false gods, we do not propose to get up any combination to force you either into a "union" or to give up the terms of your choice.

Yours very faithfully,

ONE TO WHOM YOU SENT YOUR CIRCULAR.

This Article published in the Recorder for Aug. 1905 throws light on the Federation which at first was called a Union but has the same object viz., to secure that the word God be left out of all the Christian (?) literature in China and the word Shangti substituted. The other small matters interlarded are either impossible or of little consequence : such as one Hymn Book and the same names for Churches and Chapels all over China. This has never been realized in any country and it is safe to say never will be, till there is a radical change in man's nature.